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Brooke F Adams 10/03/2006 02:19:42 PM From DB/Inbox: ECPO

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S E C R E T CAIRO 06106

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INFO: PA ORA RSO OMC LEGAT IPS DAO ECON CONS AMB DEA  
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DISSEMINATION: POL  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:FJRICCIARDONE  
DRAFTED: ECPO:CHILL-HERNDON  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 006106

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [MNUC](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER: SECRETARY RICE'S OCT 3-4 VISIT TO  
CAIRO

Classified by Ambassador Francis Ricciardone for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: Madame Secretary, warm welcome to Cairo. President Mubarak and Omar Soliman have been trying to ameliorate conditions in Gaza. They will look to you for specific measures to support Abu Mazen, specifically on salaries to workers and release of prisoners. They are sensitive to Israeli criticism on cash flows to Hamas and Israeli charges of smuggling via Rafah. Mubarak wants to help end our impasse with Bashir but shares misgivings over putting western troops in Sudan. You can play to his regional statesman's role, while reassuring him on the specific objectives of the UN force. The Egyptians have been coy about the upcoming GA vote between Venezuela and Guatemala. We urge you to highlight to Mubarak that a Venezuelan seat will be a pro-Tehran seat. On democracy, the government is poised to adopt a series of constitutional amendments and other reforms. The Egyptian political class is fiercely debating whether the results will open government or simply ensure Pharaonic succession. You may find an opportunity with Mubarak himself to urge NGO certification for IRI and NDI. Not least, you can endorse Egyptian interest in developing nuclear energy -- a potential boost for our GNEP program. END SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION.

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Peace Process  
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2. (S) We and the Egyptians want more of the same from each other: more support for Abu Mazen, more isolation for Hamas, and especially more leadership to get a larger peace process going again. Omar Soliman has been deeply engaged in negotiations for the release of Corporal Shalit, tied to a prisoner release that would politically benefit Abu Mazen.

On September 27, he leaked his letter to Khalid Mishaal, blaming him for the impasse and urging him to support a national unity government that would recognize Israel. Both he and Mubarak will seek US measures to help Abu Mazen and ease the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The Egyptians resent Israeli public criticism of complicity in smuggling at the Rafah border as domestic politicking. In fact Egyptian-Israeli border cooperation is strong, and the Egyptians are willing to accept even more technical assistance than we have been willing to provide. The Egyptians say they have no legal recourse against Hamas agents carrying cash across the border, provided the carriers file a customs declaration. The Ministry of Treasury is reportedly looking to amend current law, but they are unlikely to find a legal fix soon. If we ask for more GOE action against cash transfers now, in effect we will be asking for extra-legal measures, a sensitive request.

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Sudan  
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13. (C) Mubarak passed our message to Bashir when he passed through Cairo on September 21, and urged an end to the current impasse, but Mubarak shares Bashir's misgivings about western troops arriving unwelcome in Sudan. In such a case, Mubarak sees "another Iraq" or Islamist inspired anti-Western insurgency. Hence, the Egyptians favor a face-saving formula for Bashir with incentives. Egypt's priority remains the continued national unity of Sudan, preservation of which would ensure unhindered flow of Nile water to Egypt, and avoiding further "East/West" conflict over Darfur. You can play to Mubarak's elder statesman role while assuring him that the UN's goal in Darfur is strictly humanitarian, with no broader agenda.

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Egypt and the United Nations  
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14. (C) Cairo has not yet committed to support the Guatemalan bid for a Security Council seat. Left to their old NAMist tendencies, the MFA and even Mubarak would likely favor Venezuela. Mubarak will certainly make the decision. He despises Tehran and perhaps has not yet made the connection between Venezuela and an Iran-friendly seat in the UNSC. But he also needs to hear from you that Egypt's vote and broader influence in UN circles really matters to President Bush on this issue.

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Egypt Announces Nuclear Energy Program  
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15. (C) The big newsmaker during last week's National Democratic Party (NDP) conference was Gamal Mubarak's call for development of an Egyptian nuclear energy capacity. Perhaps wittingly, he played into our Global Nuclear Energy Partnership initiative, enabling us to immediately declare U.S. support. Journalists are still looking for a U.S.-Egyptian breach or a conspiracy angle and you will certainly be asked our views on the nuclear file.

16. (C) The Conference also unveiled -- only in the broadest terms -- an ambitious program of constitutional reforms, following on President Mubarak's campaign pledges of 2005. Reformers in the NDP assure us that these measures, to be put before Parliament in the coming weeks, will devolve power from the presidency to the parliament and the cabinet and also devolve central government powers to the regions. The devil will be in the details. Many critics regard these reforms as measures to install Gamal Mubarak as the next President. Our message to the GOE and NDP leadership has been: the bolder you are this coming parliamentary year, the more will cheer you on.

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17. (C) The GOE has maintained its June freeze on the activities of USAID-funded democracy organizations IRI, NDI, and IFES. MFA officials and Gamal have signaled some softening, but have told us this will require Mubarak's assent. We suggest that you raise it with both Mubarak and Aboul Gheit. Both will moan that IRI acted illegally by conducting political activities before it even applied to register. You can reply that IRI has apologized and both institutes are still eager to contribute to Mubarak's own reform agenda -- working with legal political parties and parliamentarians. These prestigious American institutions can become international witnesses and thus supporters to Mubarak's efforts, but frankly they are at the point of giving up on Egypt.

18. (C) GOE officials have repeatedly begged us not to raise Ayman Nour with Mubarak. But Nour remains in jail, reportedly suffering from diabetes and heart disease. Nour's wife claims he is being deprived essential medical care. Regime supporters claim he is faking. PM Nazif told us that he sent Nour his own physicians, but Nour turned them away. A presidential pardon on humanitarian medical grounds seems the best way out for all concerned.

19. (C) Meanwhile, in recent months, the GOE has intensified its campaign of detentions of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) members, culminating in a new round of arrests, including senior MB leaders. Many of them remain in custody in violation of the legal limitation of 45 days on preventive detention. We have made clear to Mubarak, Soliman and Aboul Gheit that we hold no candle for the Brotherhood, but repression seems to only play into its hands.

Again, we look forward to ensuring a successful visit.  
RICCIARDONE